

## THE HOME CIRCLE

### The Closing Year. \*

'Tis midnight's holy hour, and silence  
now  
Is brooding like a gentle spirit o'er  
o'er  
The still and pulseless world. Hark!  
on the winds  
The bell's deep tones are swelling,—  
'tis the knell  
Of the departed year. No funeral  
train  
Is sweeping past; yet, on the stream  
and wood,  
With melancholy light, the moon-  
beams rest  
Like a pale, spotless shroud; the air  
is stirred  
As by a mourner's sigh; and on yon  
cloud  
That floats so still and placidly  
through heaven,  
The spirits of the seasons seem to  
stand,—  
Young Spring, bright Summer, Au-  
tumn's solemn form,  
And Winter with his aged locks,—  
and breathe,  
In mournful cadences that come  
abroad  
Like the far wind-harp's wild and  
touching wail,  
A melancholy dirge o'er the dead  
year,  
Gone from the earth forever.

'Tis a time  
For memory and for tears. Within  
the deep,  
Still chambers of the heart, a spec-  
tre dim,  
Whose tones are like the wizard  
voice of Time  
Heard from the tomb of ages, points  
its cold  
And solemn finger to the beautiful  
And holy visions that have passed  
away,  
And left no shadow of their loveli-  
ness  
On the dead waste of life. That spec-  
tre lifts  
The coffin-lid of Hope, and Joy, and  
Love,  
And, bending mournfully above the  
pale,  
Sweet forms that slumber there,  
scatters dead flowers  
O'er what has passed to nothingness.

The year  
Has gone, and, with it, many a glo-  
rious throng  
Of happy dreams. Its mark is on  
each brow,  
Its shadow in each heart. In its swift  
course  
It waved its sceptre o'er the beauti-  
ful,—  
And they are not. It laid its pallid  
hand  
Upon the strong man, and the haugh-  
ty form  
Is fallen, and the flashing eye is dim.  
It trod the hall of revelry, where  
thronged  
The bright and joyous,—and the  
tearful wail  
Of stricken ones is heard where erst  
the song  
And reckless shout resounded

It passed o'er  
The battle-plain, where sword and  
spear and shield  
Flashed in the light of midday, and  
the strength  
Of serried hosts is shivered, and the  
grass,  
Green from the soil of carnage,  
waves above  
The crushed and mouldering skele-  
ton. It came.

\*This is No. 71 of our series of the World's Best Poems, selected especially for The Progressive Farmer by the Editor. In this series selections from the following authors have already appeared: Burns, Bryant, Mr. and Mrs. Browning, Byron, Goldsmith, Holmes, Kipling, Lanier, Longfellow, Lowell, Mark, Ham, Macaulay, Milton, Moore, Poe, Pope, and others.

And faded like a wreath of mist at  
eve;  
Yet, ere it melted in the viewless air,  
It heralded its millions to their home  
In the dim land of dreams.

Remorseless Time!  
Fierce spirit of the glass and scythe!  
—what power  
Can stay him in his silent course, or  
melt  
His iron heart to pity? On, still on  
He presses, and forever. The proud  
bird,  
The condor of the Andes, that can  
soar  
Through heaven's unfathomable  
depths, or brave  
The fury of the Northern hurricane,  
And bathe his plumage in the thun-  
der's home,  
Furls his broad wings at nightfall,  
and sinks down  
To rest upon his mountain crag,—  
but Time  
Knows not the weight of sleep or  
weariness,  
And night's deep darkness has no  
chain to bind  
His rushing pinions.

Revolutions sweep  
O'er earth, like troubled visions o'er  
the breast  
Of dreaming sorrow; cities rise and  
sink  
Like bubbles on the water; fiery isles  
Spring blazing from the ocean, and  
go back  
To their mysterious caverns; moun-  
tains rear  
To heaven their bald and blackened  
cliffs, and bow  
Their tall heads to the plain; new  
empires rise,  
Gathering the strength of hoary cen-  
turies,  
And rush down like the Alpine ava-  
lanche,  
Startling the nations; and the very  
stars,  
Yon bright and burning blazonry of  
God,  
Glitter a while in their eternal  
depths.  
And, like the Pleiads, loveliest of  
their train,  
Shoot from their glorious spheres,  
and pass away  
To darkle in the trackless void,—yet  
Time,  
Time, the tomb-builder, holds his  
fierce career,  
Dark, stern, all-pitiless, and pauses  
not  
Amid the mighty wrecks that strew  
his path,  
To sit and muse, like other con-  
querors,  
Upon the fearful ruin he has  
wrought.

—George D. Prentice.

### Prima Facie Evidence.

An English lord of the manor was returning home one night, when he found a country bumpkin standing by the kitchen door with a lantern in his hand.

"What are you doing here?" the lord asked, roughly.

"I've come a-coortin', sir," was the reply.

"A-coortin? What do you mean by that?"

"I'm a follower o' Mary, the kitchen maid."

"Is it your habit to carry a lantern when you are on such errands?"

"Yes, sir."

"Nonsense!" retorted the master, angrily. "Don't talk such stuff to me! Be off with yourself! Courting with a lantern! When I was young I never used such a thing."

"Nor, sir," said the yokel, moving rapidly away. "Judgin' by the mis-  
sus, I shouldn't think ye did."

### Mrs. McKinley as She is To-day.

The most pathetic figure in the world is the widow of President McKinley. Her slender form in black, and pale face, may be seen nearly every day, and sometimes twice a day, in a heavy dark carriage drawn by a pair of black horses, an equipage of dignity and comfort without display, going to and from the McKinley home to the receiving sepulchre where the casket that contains the remains of her husband is guarded under the flag, and palms, and flowers. The cemetery is extensive and well kept, beautifully situated, a charming grove, grassy and shady, with pleasing roads and paths, and many memorials that gleam in the shadows or glitter in the sun.

Next to the temporary tomb protected by a detachment of regulars commanded by a lieutenant of the regular army from Alabama, the spot of greatest distinction is that destined to be the resting-place of the illustrious Chief Magistrate. The elevation chosen is a gradual slope of unostentatious but commanding conspicuity, overlooking a city of homes and land of plenty, where the utilities blend with the beauties. This is as fit as that the tomb of Washington is beside the august Potomac; that Lincoln should rest in the land of Lincoln, the broad plains and bright rivers of Illinois around him; that Grant's matchless monument should preside over the riverside of the historic and legendary Hudson; that the writer of the Declaration of Independence should be uplifted in his everlasting sleep upon a mountain top of Virginia.

The walls of the parlor and sitting-room of Mrs. McKinley's home are decorated with many likenesses of President McKinley, and the pale lady in black dwells with them in the past. The face of her husband is ever before her. She has preferences and dislikes among his likenesses. One rather grave and deep-lined face does not please her, and she says of it, "My husband never wore a scowl like that—it is not a likeness." It is, however, a work of art of high grade. She did not tolerate the suggestion that perhaps sometimes when she was not present he had the look she dislikes in a portrait. Her disposition of that suggestion was, "He never looked like that." The artist did idealize—and did not improve. She inclines to favor the more youthful pictures of the President. One she cares for has been engraved for the new ten-dollar bills, but it is not the President the people knew so well in the later years.

It has been said in zeal without knowledge that Mrs. McKinley has borne up wonderfully well under her frightful trial, and is in better health than before the tragedy. It is not true. It is worth while that the world that cares for her should know the truth. She has aged since that sad, dread September, as if many bitter years had passed. There is a depth of grief newly written in her face, leaving the beauty of feature, but there is a haunting, tremulous, witsful expression even keen-

er than her words: "There is now nothing for me but to wait, and I want to go."

There is a quivering of the eyelids, lips and chin, the still signs of woe that no light can chase away until the dawn of the blessed, radiant morning when she shall meet her beloved. Her faith that the loved, unseen, are not lost, is perfect. Her intense consciousness that she is only waiting is the weariness unto death.

It is the habit of Mrs. McKinley to go to the cemetery, where her heart and her interests are, for daily devotion. She has frequently driven over her accustomed route twice a day. A trained nurse is constantly with her sitting by her side, unless some near friend is given the place, and then the nurse sits with the driver.

In all the tragedies of the stage there is no scene more sorrowful or dramatic situation more striking and painful than Mrs. McKinley at the coffin of her husband. As placed it rests on a direct line with the open gates. The outlook is eastward. A sentinel walks there in the uniform of the Army of the United States—"Glory guards with solemn round."

The widow walks to the head of the casket that rises on its supports from the stone floor, draped so that the colors of the flag glow through the other decoration. No persuasion can cause the mourner to cease from weeping—leaning upon and bowed over the evergreens, the palms, a few fresh flowers and the flag, weeping bitterly, lamentably, without restraint—until she summons resolution and totters away, tearful and sobbing, sinks into her carriage and falters to the old home.—From an article by Murat Halstead in the Saturday Evening Post, September 6th.

### THE CHANGING YEAR

September, a Month of Inspiration and Invigorating Outdoor Life.

Behold September! Tripping from the hills she comes and lo! the mystic spell of August's weaving breaks at her touch. Indolence flees to the mistress who has gone before, and the languor and lassitude and lazy contentment of midsummer gives way to a quickening of vital forces and the inspiration of endeavor. Fair September? Not the wealth of floral tribute of her sister months doth she bring, but of the fulness of the harvest doth she scatter on every side. Sere and yellow leaves flutter from the trees; they are her pledges in gold that there is no death, and April shall redeem them. The hills robe themselves in purple in the twilight hour and the air is vibrant with the plaint that "Katy did" and "Katy didn't." Once more the feathered hosts fill copse and grove and garden shrubbery, and if there be a new note, a minor chord, not present in their songs of the spring, therein is the promise that they go but for a little while. The clear air has in it a tonic which sets the rich blood to racing gloriously and fills with the desire of accomplishment the vigor which seeks expression in the world's work. It is the month of inspiration.—Country Life In America.